



Strand 2

Innovative Delivery: Methods and Approaches

Introduction

- In this strand of the Conference Proceedings the papers address several themes concerned with the delivery of networked learning and the methods, approaches, tools and infrastructures used in that delivery.


The “**virtual organisation**” concept is a major theme. Several views are offered on the meaning and implementation of the concept:

- the “**virtual campus**” where mass education is offered on campus via a local area network; this model also has the potential of extending the campus well beyond the boundaries of the institution, making available to distance-learners those on-campus resources and learning opportunities not normally accessible to them.
- the “**networked university**” where a group of dispersed universities in one country work together to produce a virtual, inter-institutional curriculum where courses are shared, and sometimes produced collaboratively, so helping to overcome the problem of supporting minority interests.

The support of collaborative learning by the innovative application of Internet-based tools is often a major theme in many of the papers. The migration of artificial intelligence ideas and methods to networked learning is also something which is considered.

Central to much of networked learning is the role of the library. Networked learners require the full services that are ordinarily available to on-campus learners, yet we know from the experience of second generation distance learning that this has been virtually impossible to date. This might be changing. The availability of electronic learning environments and tools makes it possible for the library to make catalogues available online, and also to provide a learning support service which can offer online course readings.

Much teaching these days is carried out by teams and the electronic support mechanisms and tools required by them to collaborate in the design and production of networked courses is now an



emerging field. Several papers address the issues of course producers via some form of networked environment.

Finally, several papers address issues to do with delivering courses online. Putting source lectures and slides online is relatively easy. Designing a complete course for Internet delivery - ensuring that quality is embedded in the course materials and in the learning environment - is another thing completely. In support of this, quality assurance mechanisms have to be in place. This is a lesson we have already learned from the design of second generation distance learning, and it is one that will be central to our efforts to established networked learning as a major new learning paradigm'.